

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SCCT-01 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00 /085 W

----- 117185

R 251211Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6399

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSYKHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NY

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, PINT,EG, LY

SUBJ: ABORTED HIJACKING; FOURTH ACCOMPLICE ARRESTED: GOE

CONSULATE IN BENGHAZI ORDERED CLOSED; PRESS PRAISE GOE, FLAYS

LIBYA

1. PRESS AUG 25 REPORTS ARREST OF FOURTH PERSON FOR COMPLICITY
IN "LIBYAN" HIJACKING OF EGYPTIAN AIRLINE AUG 23. ACCUSED,
MUHAMMAD MAHDI ABDALLAH, WAS NAMED BY OTHER THREE AS PERSON
WHO INTRODUCED EGYPTIAN HIJACKER TO PALESTINIAN WHO CAME
TO TERMS WITH LIBYAN INTELLIGENCE. HIS NATIONALITY NOT
SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED, BUT PAPERS CREATE IMPRESSION HE IS
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EGYPTIAN. HIJACKERS REPORTED INTERROGATED FOR 12 CONTINUOUS

HOURS AUG 24 BY MILITARY PROSECUTOR BUT CONFLICTING STORY
SAYS DOCTORS SUPERVISING THEIR TREATMENT DECIDED INTERROGA-
TION SHOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL THEIR HEALTH IMPROVED. ACCORD-
ING TO PRESS, HIJACKERS WILL BE TRIED BY MILITARY TRIBUNAL
AUG 31.

2. GOE CONSULATE CLOSED. GUMHURRIYA REPORTS THAT LARG HAS
REQUESTED CLOSURE OF EGYPTIAN CONSULATE IN BENGHAZI "IN
RETALIATION" FOR RECENT EGYPTIAN DECISION TO CLOSE LIBYAN
CONSULATE IN ALEXANDRIA. LOW KEY TREATMENT OF THIS REPORT
REINFORCES IMPRESSION OF GOE EQUANIMITY ON POSSIBILITY OF
BREAK IN RELATIONS SET BY QADHAFI FOR SEPT 1.

3. LIBYAN PERIL. PUBLIC IMPRESSION AGAINST THREAT OF LIYBAN
SABOTAGE CONTINUES. "ENLARGED CONFERENCE" WITH WESTERN
TRIBAL CHIEFS, ASU OFFICIALS AND SENIOR SECURITY OFFICERS IN
ATTENDANCE HELD AUG 24 IN MERSA MATRUH. WESTERN TRIBES RE-
QUESTED TO ASSIST SECURITY AND FRONTIER FORCES IN INTELL-
IGENCE GATHERING AND PROTECTION AGAINST LIBYAN INFILTRATION.

4. PRESS WAS DOWNRIGHT SMUG IN ITS ACCOUNT OF WORLD APPROVAL
OF EGYPTIAN HANDLING OF HIJACKING AND INTERNATIONAL CONDEMN-
ATION OF "IMMORAL ATTEMPTS BY LIBYAN AGENTS". PAPERS NOTED
FATAH CONDEMNATION AND CALL FOR URGENT TRAIL OF HIJACKERS,
ALONG WITH OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV DENUNICIATION AND PURPORTED AMER-
ICAN MEDIA DESCRIPTION OF "SPECTACULAR" EGYPTIAN OPERATION.
AHAM, DOUBTLESS WITH MEMORY OF ENTEBBE FRESH IN MIND, CON-
SIDERED EGYPTIAN HANDLING OF HIJACKING PROOF OF EGYPTIAN FORCES
HIGH DEGREE OF READINESS, PHYSICAL FITNESS AND PREPAREDNESS
FOR SACRIFICE. OPERATION "BOOSTED EGYPTIAN REPUTATION" PART-
ICULARLY SINCE IT CARRIED OUT WITHOUT SINGLE FATALITY OR
"SHEDDING OF HUMAN BLOOD" (HIJACKERS DON'T COUNT). AKHBAR
EDITORIAL, "A GOOD LESSON FOR TERRORISTS", AGAIN AFFIRMED
UNCOMPRISING EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERROR-
ISM. "UNANIMOUS CONDEMNATION" BY ARAB COUNTRIES OF PIRACY
AND TERRORISM "IS INSUFFICIENT" UNLESS COVERTED INTO PRAC-
TICAL STEPS.

5. LIBYAN MADMAN. INDEFATIGABLE AKHBAR EDITOR AHMED ZAYN
BLASTED QADHAFI'S UNRECONSTRUCTED MADNESS. SAID THAT ARAB
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TACTIC OF DISASSOCIATION FROM QADHAFI IN HOPE HE WOULD COME
TO HIS SENSES HAS OBVIOUSLY FAILED AND STRESSED THAT QADHAFI
GAME "THREATENS HIS OWN NECK."

6. ALL PAPERS CARRY PRIMIN SALIM'S REMARKS TO POLITICAL
BUREAU OF ASU THAT "EGYPT WILL NOT PAY ANY ATTENTION TO CHILD-
ISH TRIVIALITIES" OF QADHFI AND THAT "EGYPT AND THE ARAB
NATIONAL WILL NOT PAY ANY ATTENTION TO HIM". THESE ARE AT

GREAT VARIANCE WITH PRESIDENT'S STRONG PUBLIC POSITION
THAT QADHAFI WILL PAY THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS CRIMES AND MAY
SIGNAL A CHANGE IN GOE PUBLIC POSTURE. OR MAYBE SALIM JUST
HASN'T GOTTEN THE WORD.
EILTS

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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